



AAC Publications

Kang Nachugo (6,737m), southwest face, Monsoon (not to summit)

Asia, Nepal, Rolwaling

I was searching for an area in Nepal that is off the beaten track, not well known by regular tourists, yet still offers unclimbed peaks and faces. After two friends showed me photos of Rolwaling's mountains, I knew this was the place. Santiago Padros (Italy) and I spent one month in Na, living in a lodge owned by a warm Sherpa family. For the first two weeks we were attended by the parents, and after they left for the winter with their yaks, the youngest daughter took over. Due to this we became close with the friendly local community.

During an initial week of cloud and rain we were able to acclimatize to 5,000m. We then got a message from Europe forecasting a two-day weather window, so we went up the Ripimo Shar Glacier, spent two nights at 5,000m, then climbed the south ridge of Ripimo Shar to 5,650m. From there we were able to see the huge climbing potential of the region. During the following days the weather worsened, and we could only make an ascent of Yalung Ri (5,650m), which we did in a fast one-day climb from Na.

When the weather cleared we set off again for the Ripimo Shar Glacier, where we had cached gear. Unfortunately, in one and a half meters of fresh snow it took double the six hours we had estimated to reach our cache, and when we subsequently tried to reach our proposed objective over breakable crust, we knew conditions were not on our side.

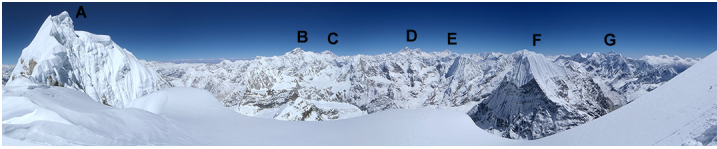
Back in Na we had only five days left for climbing. Tired of long approaches, we decided to attempt a peak "in our backyard." Kang Nachugo had only one ascent, and the southwest face remained unclimbed. It had been attempted by David Gottlieb and Joe Puryear, who in 2008 climbed for three days to 6,400m before forced to retreat in bad weather. A few days later they climbed the mountain by the long west ridge.

We reached the foot of the face on October 20 and pitched the tent. Next day we were able to climb around 1,200m. The first half of this we climbed unroped, but as the terrain became steeper we tied in and moved simultaneously. At around 3 p.m. we began to look for a place to pitch the tent, but the terrain forced us to continue to 6:30 p.m., when we finally found a poor ledge under a large rock barrier. There was not enough height for the tent, but it was enough for us to lie down and rest.

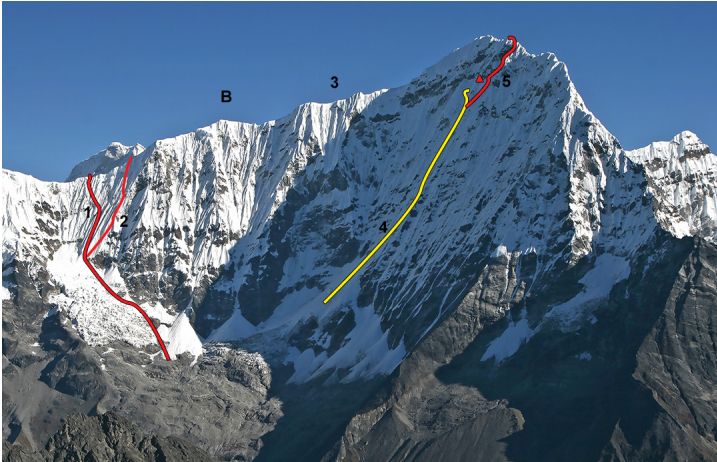
On the 22nd we climbed a few steep pitches on perfect snow and ice to the south-southeast ridge. We climbed up the crest a little way to a small, flat-topped prominence at 6,650m. It was midday, and although the distance to the summit, along an exposed, corniced ridge, was not great, we realized that continuing would require spending one more night on the mountain. We both agreed it would be best to go down, so we made 20 rappels and then downclimbed to reach the bottom of the face and the site of our first camp. The following morning we descended to Na. We have named our line Monsoon (ca 1,500m, 75°). After our climb we decided to make a donation—the equivalent of the peak fee—to the Beding Monastery school, to support the education of kids in the valley.

Domen Kastelic, Slovenia

Images



The wonderful panorama from ca 6,650m on the south-southeast ridge. (A) Kang Nachugo. (B) Cho Oyu. (C) Gyachung Kang. (D) Everest. (E) Makalu. (F) Chobutse (a.k.a Chobuje; summits of Tarkargo and Tengi Ragi Tau just visible behind. (G) Likhu Chuli group, with top of Numbur visible behind.



Kang Nachugo from the south. (B) Bamongo. (1) Access to the west ridge used by Gottlieb and Puryear to make the first ascent of Bamongo and Kang Nachugo. (2) Chinese-Nepalese route to make the second ascent of Bamongo. The Gottlieb-Puryear start is marked; the Chinese Nepalese team followed the rock rib left of the icefall, then crossed the glacier to the foot of the face. (3) West ridge. (4) Gottlieb-Puryear attempt. (5) Kastelic-Santos completion of southwest face to 6,650m on south-southeast ridge.



Emerging onto the south-southeast ridge of Kang Nachugo.



High on the southwest face of Kang Nachugo.

Article Details

Author	Domen Kastelic
Publication	AAJ
Volume	0
Issue	0
Page	0
Copyright Date	2014
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions